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*Social England.* Vol. iii. (From the Accession of Henry VIII. to the Death of Elizabeth.) By Various Writers. Edited by H. D. TRAILL. London: Cassell & Co.; New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1895. 8vo. pp. xii + 591.

THIS last emanation of Mr. Traill's editorial supervision shows the merits and defects of the preceding volumes. Conceived and executed as a co-operative study, by various writers, of the history of England in every phase—religion, laws, learning, arts, industry, commerce, science, literature, and manners—it is not surprising that the work displays unequal merit.

The most apparent fault of the work is lack of continuity. This was inevitable, of course, in a work which is the combined result of the labors of so many scholars; but it was the duty of the editor to make the whole a composite result, and this has not been done. The third volume—and this applies to the series—would be improved if the labor of the twenty-five scholars who are represented were compressed into that of half that number. There is no reason why the first portion of chapter 1 (pp. 1-70) might not have been entrusted to one author instead of being the product of four. The history of the constitution under Henry VIII.; the suppression of the monasteries; the relations of England and Rome, and those of England to France and Spain, all formed the political history of England and had a unity in the personality of Henry and Wolsey too vital to be so separated in treatment. Again, why must "The New Learning," "English Literature," and "Scottish Literature" be divided among three several writers? And why have Mr. Oman discuss "The Art of War" and Mr. Clowes "The Navy?"

There has been too much division of labor. The subject of the dissolution of the monasteries is an extreme case in point, no less than nine persons discussing or alluding to its effects in eleven different places (pp. 19; 20-2; 35; 54-65; 92; 114-5; 127; 140; 215; 252; 261-5). The dissolution itself falls to one writer (pp. 54-65), and the disposal of the spoils to another (pp. 65-70), when there seems to be no good reason why the subject as a whole might not have been given to one author for thorough consideration. Such differentiation is likely to lead to repetition or disparity of statement. For example, the reader is thrice edified by an account of the origin of enclosures.

One of the best parts of the book is that devoted to a consideration of Wolsey and his policy. Mr. A. L. Smith makes clear the point that Wolsey's foreign policy was not of his own choosing (pp. 4-14); and just here Mr. Smith deserves credit for removing the stigma so long attached to the cardinal's name for the "amicable loan," and placing the burden where it belongs. Wolsey's influence, however, upon the economic development of England at this time, especially his commercial policy, is imperfectly presented. We must certainly disagree, moreover, with Mr. Smith's judgment that Wolsey was "the last mediæval minister—the last of a line which goes back to Dunston and includes Lanfranc and Roger of Salisbury, Becket and Langton, Arundel and Beaufort, as well as Fox and Wareham" (p. 6; cf. p. 45), even as Mr. Arthur Hassall apparently disagrees with him (p. 14); a disparity which has escaped the editorial pruning-knife.

The reign of Henry VIII. was essentially a Renaissance period for England. Mr. Bass Mullinger's account of "The New Learning" is proof of this. In reflecting Renaissance character and color, in their tastes and sympathies, and foibles, too, Henry and his minister were true sons of the age.

But it would be unfair harshly to criticise a work, which, while written by scholars, is not intended for the deep student of history, but for the general reader. And because it is for this class that *Social England* is intended, one is glad to find that the vulgar error has been disposed of, that the War of the Roses left the Tudors supreme because the old nobility had been cut off in the conflict. Numbers of the great feudal houses had passed away before the war began, and during the war, between 1455 and 1487, not a few died out from natural causes. The old nobility was depleted no doubt, but the English peerage in 1485 had *utterly* lost but very few old names. Around Henry VII. were still Audleys, Blounts, Cliffords, Dacres, Herberts, Scropes, Berkeleys, Greys, and Lumleys. In 1499 Henry put to death the last rival, making the seventh English family of very high estate to perish in the fifteenth century. But Stafford, the Duke of Buckingham, was put to death by Henry VIII.; the Nevilles were crushed by Elizabeth, while the Veres, the earls of Oxford, survived until the reign of Anne.

Another commendable feature is that the Catholic reaction under Mary is shown to have been less than ordinarily supposed, and Mary is seen to have been a misguided but morbidly conscientious woman,

whose life had been soured by trial and persecution, and not a bloodthirsty creature actuated by motives of mere cruelty and vengeance.

One minor correction may be made: Kett is sometimes spelled *Ke#* and sometimes *Ke#*. And, why does Mr. Saintsbury spoil a cherished form by speaking (p. 524) of "Benjamin" Jonson?

JAMES WESTFALL THOMPSON.